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UNCLAS FRANKFURT 007197

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SUBJECT: Baden-Wuerttemberg Minister-President Teufel Forced to Decla
as Succession Debate Intensifies

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1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Recent events have led to calls for Baden-Wuerttem
Minister-President Erwin Teufel (Christian Democrat -- CDU) to step d
Teufel's role in securing lucrative private sector jobs for retiring
face on calling new elections after the resignation of his FDP Justic
have angered the B-W public, alienated FDP coalition partners and rou
within Teufel's own party. On August 16, he stated he would announce
candidacy in 2006 B-W state elections by the end of the year. Party
caucus chief and longtime Teufel rival Guenther Oettinger to replace
candidate in 2006. END SUMMARY.

Teufel Miscues Bring Succession Debate Into the Open

2. (SBU) Hobbled by recent mistakes (reftels) and under pressure from
Minister-President Erwin Teufel declared on August 16 that he would d
of the year whether or not to run again as Minister-President in 2006
indicated previously that he would wait until a special CDU nominatin
February of 2005. CDU caucus chief and longtime rival Guenther Oetti
favorite among party members to succeed Teufel and has exploited Teuf
miscues to broaden his political base and solidify his claim as likel
and-file Christian Democrats speculate that a refusal by Teufel to st
1991, he is the longest-serving state leader in Germany) could produc
similar to the one that removed Helmut Kohl as chancellor in 1998 aft
office.

3. (SBU) B-W Young Christian Democrat leader (and 2004 ConGen Frankf
Thomas Bareiss told a Pol/Econ representative that he was confident t
announce his retirement. He conceded, however, that Oettinger's like
made Teufel reluctant to cede power and that excessive pressure from
might cause him to dig in his heels, opining that such an impasse cou
within the party and damage the CDU's chances for the 2006 elections.
former Teufel advisors made headlines on August 2 when they stated pu
should retire.

Teufel Uses "Mystery Poll" to Rebut Critics

4. (SBU) Teufel has dismissed recent speculation on his future by ci
conducted by the Allensbach Institute (a well-respected German pollin
that placed his approval rating at above 50 percent. According to Te
shows Culture Minister (and Teufel favorite) Annette Schavan as a rel
popular choice for B-W's top post than caucus chief Oettinger. Oetti
the numbers by noting that Schavan's ministerial portfolio gave her g
among the general public and made her the natural choice for those re
their choice on name recognition. He qualified the results by noting
rose to Minister-President from the unlikely post of caucus chief. T
repeated calls by CDU and opposition politicians to make the poll pub
note that the Allensbach poll predates recent Teufel missteps and doe
Minister-President's current popularity. They point to a July Infrat
percent of respondents as in favor of Teufel's retirement as a more r
Teufel's dwindling base of support.

5. (SBU) B-W's Social Democrat (SPD) opposition underscores the incr
of the Teufel camp. SPD member Nils Schmidt relayed to us that Chris
have been openly leaking information from confidential meetings betwe
CDU caucus in an attempt to discredit Teufel. Schmidt speculated tha
to step down in 2006 could jeopardize the chances of his chosen succe
Schavan with those in the party (and the state at large) looking to m
following the departure of the longtime Minister-President.

COMMENT

6. (SBU) The CDU has dominated political discourse in Baden-Wuerttem
decades, and growing opposition to Teufel is unlikely to affect the c
retain the Minister-Presidency in 2006. Some state and local CDU rep
see fallout from the Teufel saga, however, as disenchantment with Teu
balance in favor of SPD challengers (and incumbents) in close races.
continued pressure from party leadership will convince Teufel to with
consideration as the 2006 CDU candidate in an attempt to preserve his
Teufel may try to use his exit from power as leverage to gain party a
as his successor, Oettinger's broad political base and connections wi
secure his emergence as the CDU's candidate in 2006. END COMMENT.

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